

The Warning: A Prequel to Halo 2

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Summary: Here it is, the unofficial prequel to Halo 2. It's quite a good story, with an interesting ending. The inexperienced Sargeant of a military base in the distance of space must get out a warning to earth...before it's too late. Please R&R.

The Warning: A Prequel to Halo 2

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In honor of the pending release of Halo 2, I present to you my own little unofficial prequel to the Covenant invasion of Earth. All proper names and object names are properties of their respective owners. Enjoy!

3136**_A.D. Gentares Outer-Solar Communications Relay Station, Grid #474._**

**_Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 140 light-years out of
_****_Neptune_****_'s orbit. 0500 hours, Confederation Standard Time._**

**_Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Base Codename "Infidel
Alpha"._**

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Sr. Sergeant Ren Noctune fooled around with the removable barrel of the brand new, standard issue battle rifle that had arrived in a small cargo shipment yesterday. It was a pretty

weapon, as far as guns go, with a comfy shoulder stock, a responsive hair trigger, and a shiny 10x zoom laser aligned scope adorning the top rail.

“Too bad I'll never get to kill anything with it,” Ren thought to himself. It wasn't that he actually had the desire to kill anyone or anything. In fact, that was the entire reason he'd joined up with the Marine's Tech Corps. In the first place. His family had a long military history. His father, his mother, 2 grandparents, 4 aunts, 3 uncles, and both of his brothers joined up as soon as they were old enough. Most had seen action. A few had medals to show for it. As Ren clicked Mark III .30 cal. Bullets into the rifle's clip, he thought of how pressured he had been to follow in the footsteps of his relatives. Everywhere he went conversations with friends and family always had a way of shifting to Ren's future career as a Marine. For the most part he played along, always saying how eager he was to join up. But he left out one crucial detail: he wasn't. Ren's father had been the worst, by far. Instead of bedtime stories about space pirates and far away kingdoms, Ren had gotten war tales of how his brethren had played crucial roles in fending off the initial Covenant onslaught, and how if he didn't do the same, his family's name would be tarnished forever. “A cliché to be sure.”

But now it seemed Ren's chances at glory were smashed. After all, the legendary Master Chief had destroyed the entire Covenant Fleet. Now the Marines were simply mopping up any remnants and insurgents. Ren's own communication station had been undergoing supply stripping, getting ready for the end of the war. All that was left were a few light weapons, one heavy single-man rocket system, an M12 LRV Warthog with a 7.12mm mounted chain gun, and a 15 man skeleton crew to keep things from falling apart. And see it as how the Captain in charge of things at the station had already returned to Earth for his discharge, Ren was the commanding officer of the whole station.

“What a kingdom,” Ren said out loud as he surveyed the harsh terrain of the small, rock-like planet. Overall, it was a good deal smaller than Mars, only slightly larger than the Moon. The surface ran deep with ancient craters from a more turbulent period in the planet's history. The ice caps had long since melted, leaving permanent crevices in the ground. The sky, although well lit, was under constant dust-cover. Not cloud cover. Dust-cover. Ren himself was sitting in the main observation tower of his station, looking out of the wall-sized bullet proof, shatter proof, laser proof, rocket proof window. He tapped his rifle against his Mark I Ferro-Fibrous Plasma Resistant armor. Standard issue, of course. It made a satisfying clink. The door to the tower slid open with a whoosh, and in walked Ren's favorite young soldier, Marcos Gullites.

“Howdy, there, captain. How goes the surveying. Anything new or exciting today?”

“Well, I think that rock mighta moved a few feet from yesterday. Other than that, same old, same old.”

“I believe the time has come once again for us to make our daily scouting report, eh sir?” Gullites

suggested.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Yeah, right you are private. Let's saddle up." The scouting report was a mandatory little device that the brass used to keep the men from falling asleep. Ren and Marcos were usually the ones honored with the job. It required nothing more than a quick sweep of the immediate area and some scanner readings, then a transmission of the info back to Earth where it would be stored in some computer, collecting dust. Normally, Ren would have hated the tedious task. However, the warthog made it fun.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ When Ren and Marcos reached the base's vehicle bay, they both sprinted over to the advanced car. Ren hopped in the driver's seat, as usual, and Marcos slipped in beside him in the passenger's spot. Neither bothered to man the chain gun, which hadn't even been fired at hostiles before. Besides, if they got attacked by some animal or something, they both had firearms to deal with it. Marcos was a good shot, to boot.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Ren hit the remote button that lifted the bay door, and the nimble craft sped out onto the rocky terrain. Ren was a speedy but careful driver, and took care to stay only on the beaten road and not to fall into the crevices. He planned to take them up on the ridge, get their readings, maybe shot a few rocks, and head back. Very cut and dry.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "So sarge," Marcos started. "What do you plan to do when you get home? Gonna take the wife somewhere special?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Maybe I'll bring her up to the station. This place seems like a nice spot to vacation, doesn't it?" They both shared a chuckle. Ren never wanted to see this planet again. What he really planned to do was use his soldier's benefits and find a nice place to settle down and retire with his wife. Maybe have some kids, even. Ren was only 36, and not only had his own money, but his inheritance that he had received when his grandfather passed. He still had plenty of living to do.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Marcos had different plans. He was looking to find a programming job in a major metropolis somewhere. Maybe with Mungie or Bicrosoft, the two biggest technology names on Earth.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ The Warthog pulled up to the top of the ridge, and the occupants hopped out. Marcos set up the scanners while Ren peered through the scope of his rifle. For Ren, the view was getting duller every day. Nothing but rock, cliff, rock, dust, hill, rock, rock, rock. And the occasional stone. But then, just as he was lowering his gun, a flash of purple caught his eye. Then another one. Wren snapped the scope back up to his eye as quickly as possible, and scanned the terrain again. Sure enough, two purple blurs were whipping through the area, headed straight in the direction of the base. Ren recognized the figures instantly. All the downtime gave him a lot of opportunities to study his enemy fact charts. They were covenant scout vehicles. Ghosts.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Gullites!" Marcos jolted when he heard the call. He turned from his equipment to see a Horrified looking

Sergeant Noctune and some strange things behind him. It took him a minute to realize what they were. He instantly gathered up his gear and hopped into the gunner seat of the Warthog, before Sarge could even issue the command. He was itching for a fight.

Ren now saw the full force that was coming at them. 4 ghosts, 3 flying banshees, 2 plasma tanks, and a slew of foot soldiers, loosely organized into platoons of grunts, headed by elite soldiers. Shield wielding jackals were mixed in, and bringing up the rear were the behemoths of the covenant army. Hunters.

"Impossible...." was the only word that reached Ren's lips. He knew what to do, however. The procedure had been drilled into his head. He had two priorities. 1: Set up a defensive perimeter to hold the base. 2: Send an emergency transmission to Earth, notifying them of the attack. But before he could accomplish either of those, Ren had to get their asses out of there.

"Gullites? You've got a job to do, son."

"Yes sir?" Ren tossed him his rifle.

"You see the scary looking fellows in the back?"

"Hunters, sir. Shall I give 'em a welcoming present?"

"Affirmative, private. You'll have to aim for that soft patch of flesh just beneath their chests. It's their only weak point. Breath deep, stay steady. One shot, one kill." Marcos steadied the rifle and crouched down in the Warthog. He found the orangey spot sarge was talking about. As the Hunter's walked, they kept moving their arms in front of it. It was a tough shot. Marcos knew he could make it. A bang rang out, and a Hunter fell dead. Instantly the other enemies took defensive positions, and the second hunter looked in the direction of the sniper.

"They see us, sir. I can't get in another shot." Marcos stated.

"That's fine, private you did good. Let's get the hell back to base."

Marcos slid back into the gunner position, and Ren took the wheel. He cursed under his breath as he saw the enemy vehicles advancing toward them at break neck speed. He gunned the engine to maximum, but the Covenant were still advancing. Ren glanced up ahead. The path led in between two cliffs, creating a narrow inlet, maybe two Warthogs wide. Beyond that the path opened up, and a series of ditches ran parallel to the road. From there it was a clear shot to the base.

Ren's thoughts were interrupted by a burst of plasma fire whizzing by the jeep. Marcos answered with the chain gun, keeping the sights

steady on the enemies. He began to swerve side to side to deter the blasts. An idea formed in Ren's mind. He noticed that the Ghosts were a good ways ahead of the other vehicles, and they were gaining fast. Ren let the Ghosts get a bit closer, and then he slammed on the brakes. The two grunts manning the vehicles couldn't react quickly enough, and crashed into the walls of the inlet. The vehicles remained in tact, but the drivers were thrown. Marcos fired, bringing them both down with one sweep.

Ren knew the tanks couldn't maneuver through the narrow path, and would have to find a different way o the base. However, the Banshees and foot soldiers would still be in pursuit.

Â If the Banshees got directly above them, Marcos wouldn't be able to shoot them down, as the Warthog's gun could not look straight up. They'd be easy targets. Ren had another plan, but it was dangerous. He gently guided the jeep off the road and close to the ditches. With one swift steering motion, he dropped the jeep in, expertly maintaining control of the craft. When the Banshees did appear over head, they had no idea where the Warthog had disappeared to. But the Warthog could see them. As soon as the passed over him, Marcos let loose. It took a few minutes, but eventually he reduced the Banshees to bullet ridden fuselages.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Ren whipped out his pistol and fired a few rounds back at the advancing troops as they pulled into the vehicle bay.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â "Blast doors down, sound the phase 4 alarm, code 41. Wake up the boys." Ren yelled.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â "Yes sir, sarge." Marcos complied. He made his way to a control board by a wall speaker and bushed some buttons. Instantly a red hue fell over the base and a calm but potent siren rang out.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â "Private, accompany me to main deck. We have a report to send." The pair climbed the stairs that led out of the vehicle bay and sped through the halls towards the main deck tower. On the way, they passed some of the other 13 men that occupied the base, all headed towards their various stations. As they passed, they asked Ren various questions, all wanting to know what was going on. Ren gave the same response to every man:

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â "Same as the code says, boys. Were under attack. Keep a cool head." Ren was never much for words.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Ren led Marcos through the halls of the base, making sure to check that the main front blast doors had shut. Upon reaching the front chamber, he saw that the doors were shut, but badly dented and damaged, as if something had been trying to ram its way through.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â "What the He-" Ren was interrupted as the answer to his unfinished question slammed into the metallic doors with a devastating thud. Purple light and blazing heat seeped through the door where it had been breached and cracked, and the edges began to melt.

“They must be shelling the doors, sir!” Marcos noticed. “But how could they have gotten those tanks around to this side of the base that fast?”

Ren knew Marcos was right. And they couldn't have been able to maneuver their artillery into this position that quickly. That left only one possibility: “They've got more tanks down here!” Ren was morbid with fear. A full scale invasion. Impossible. _Impossible! The Covenant Armada was destroyed!_ After he had gotten over the initial shock, his mission came rushing back. They were a communications relay station after all, and it was his job to report the incident, defend the base and, failing that, escape by any means necessary.

“Belay that fear there, Gullites,” Ren ordered, noticing the pale stiffness that had grown over the private's face. “We've still got some work to be done.” Ren had to grab Marcos under the arm and pull him for a few steps, but eventually they were back track towards the main tower. The tower itself would be a prime target for the Covenant tanks, except for the fact that it had been structured behind a rock face that jutted out slightly from the cliff that the base had been built in to. Ren knew they'd be safe there while they made their transmission. When they reached the ladder that led to the upper deck of the tower, Marcos stopped.

“Permission to procure a higher-caliber weapon, sir?” Marcos requested in full military fashion.

“Granted, Private. What do you have in mind?” Marcos tossed Ren the scoped battle rifle he had used for the Hunter take-down.

“Just somethin' that'll teach those assholes not to come back to _my_ station.” “Uh, sorry sir, _your_ station, that is.”

“That's fine, private. Looking to get the rocket launcher, eh? Well, grab yourself a more practical arm; you'll need it if we're in close-quarters combat.”

“Yes, sir.”

Marcos hustled through the automatic door on the other side of the room, across from the ladder. It led to the nearly-naked armory. He returned a few minutes later hauling a large metal shape over his shoulder and gripping a shotgun in his free hand. The pair made their way up the ladder, Marcos struggling to maintain himself and the rocket launcher. When they reached the top, Ren's instinct and training kicked in and he went to work at the consoles. Marcos covered the ladder hatch. Ren opened a direct link to the head quarters on Earth, and tapped in a few more commands. He then uploaded the data fields from that days test, and composed a brief, to the point description of the attack, describing the enemy's positions and forces as best known to him. He also included their own status. Thinking a little harder, and after some hesitation, Marcos included a paragraph of Marcos' sharp-shooting and gunning. He also linked in the video feeds from the warthog's camera's and sensors, showing the heroic escape outside the base. He then input the camera

feeds from the base. If anyone did anything honor-worthy here, the brass would know about it. The last thing he did before sending the transmission was open the monitor that fed views from beyond the planet's barely-there atmosphere, up in outer space. Maybe the brass could tag the drop ship that lowered the forces down onto the planet. Nothing could have prepared Ren for what he saw through the monitor. It wasn't a Covenant drop ship. It was a hundred Covenant drop ships. At least, that's what Ren could estimate. Along with hundreds of Covenant freighters, bombers, landers, and even ships Ren had never seen before, even in pictures. Covenant ships filling up the void of space as far as the monitor's eye could see. "They're headed straight for Earth," Ren deduced. A nauseas feeling grew, no, burst inside of Ren's stomach, and he bent towards the floor, ready to vomit.

Marcos took a quick glance over his shoulder, and saw the sarge doubled over, looking pale as a ghost. "Sarge!" Marcos called, but it was as if Ren was in his own little world. Marcos looked to the hatch, saw it was clear, and rushed to the Sergeant's aid. He propped him up and calmed him down until he could speak clearly.

"Moni-tor!" Was the first thing he could utter. Marcos steadied Ren, and then looked to the screen. His reaction was just about the same as Ren's.

"Good God almighty," Marcos said weakly, as he realized, just like Ren did, that all the assurance and comforting they had been given by the brass that the enemy was dead, that Master Chief had wiped them out, that they could finally go home, disappeared in a split second. "What do we do, Sarge?" Marcos asked. "What can we do against that?"

By this time, Ren had regained his footing and his thinking. "We finish our job, Private." He responded coolly, even though he was burning inside. "There is no way we can hold this base against that kind of force. We send our transmission, and then we get the hell out of here." Ren added another paragraph to his report describing what he had just seen and patched the camera feeds in. At least the brass would see this force that was headed for Earth. He marked the report as "Urgent" and "Highest Priority". There was no way this message was going to be over looked. "All finished, let's make to the escape ship."

The escape ship was stored in its own sector of the base that had a retractable roof so that the craft could make a quick exit. Unfortunately, that area was a good distance from the main tower. Ren saw that the quickest way was to go back through the main blast door chamber, into the mess hall, and through the vehicle bay. The ship was on the other side of the bay. Ren brought up the camera to see that the main doors were still barely intact. If they hurried, they could make it past there before they were breached. The only threat then was that the gate in the vehicle bay would be destroyed, and they'd have to fight their way through. Once inside the escape chamber, they could call the other men over the air-com to the ship and make their way back to Earth.

The two men moved swiftly down the ladder and through the corridors that led to the main blast doors. Ren peeked

around the corner and, seeing a large, gaping hole in the center of the door, signaled for Marcos to halt. Ren peeked further and saw two orange-backed Covenant grunts in the center of the room, with two more on the opposite end. Elite stood next to them. Ren drew a frag grenade from his person and primed it. In one fluid motion, He threw the device and burst from his cover, rifle blazing. He couldn't tell how many he shot; his vision was obscured by smoke and purple fluids. The grenade had landed right next to the elite, wounding it and killing one of the grunts nearby. Ren took cover behind a computer panel. It turned out he had only managed to shoot down one of the other grunts, leaving 2 grunts and a wounded Elite in his path. He didn't dare try another stunt like that; a wounded Elite could do just as much damage as a healthy one. The Covenant now fired plasma bolts at Ren's position, but he was protected for the moment by the computer panel. Marcos saw his chance. He pumped his shotgun and snuck around behind the enemy. He moved silently within 5 feet of the elite, settled his shot gun and—

BAM! Ren saw bits of what looked like purple noodles splatter on the wall beside him. He then noticed one dark eyeball in the mess. _"Hope he didn't wear hats,"_ Ren thought to himself. Two more quick reports, each followed by a high pitched screech signaled the grunts had been taken care of as well. Ren emerged from his cover to see Marcos, smoking shotgun in hand. "Nice shooting there, Private."

"Ah, that was nothing compared to that grenade work. Where'd you get that arm, Sarge?"

"Well, I did some pitching ba—" Ren was interrupted by an explosion of green plasma to his right. He flinched from the blast, then raised his rifle. He realized what had fired the shot just in time to see it hurling toward him at full speed. A Hunter. Ren gunned his rifle at the figure, but the Hunter ignored them as if he was being shot with a water pistol. Knowing he couldn't dodge the Hunter, he closed his eyes, lowered his shoulder, and braced for the collision. But instead of a jarring tackle, he only felt a shake and heard an explosion. He opened his eyes to see a brutalized Hunter lying lifelessly in a corner, and Private Gullites holding a smoking rocket launcher, loading a rocket into the chamber. Ren opened his mouth to thank him, but Marcos cut him off.

"Thank me when we're outta here, lets go!"

They ran through the other corridors without confrontation until they reached the Mess Hall. Six men had flipped a table in the center of the room and were taking cover behind it against a squad of grunts with two Elites commanding them. Upon entering, Marcos sent a speeding rocket into the Covenant position, splattering alien all over the walls. The elites shifted their focus from the table to the two new antagonists and opened fire. As Marcos and Ren made a mad dash for cover, a plasma bolt struck Marcos in the right arm. He yelped and dropped the rocket launcher.

"Damn, Private, you okay?" Ren inquired. He grabbed Marcos and helped him to get behind a corner, out of the line of fire. "Let's have a look at that."

“God, it burns! Oh god!” Marcos clutched at his arm, but Ren took his hand away to have a look at the wound. He removed the armor plating, which had luckily absorbed most of the shot. “Okay, you’re alright, nothing a little first aid can’t fix.” Ren grabbed a Med-Kit off of the wall and applied a cooling gel, then a dose of Bactix, an all purpose healing spray. He finished by dressing the wound.

“Okay, I think I’ll be alright.” Marcos said. “The rocket launcher is still out there! We gotta clear those Covenant to move on.”

“Don’t you worry about that, I’ll take care of it.” Ren assured. He charged out into the room and dove onto the rocket launcher. He slid it behind the upturned table to the other marines, and then ran to the table. Meanwhile, Marcos was peppering the Covenant with buckshot, taking out a few grunts. Ren lobbed a rocket straight into the torso of an Elite, killing it and the one next to it. The surviving marines, of whom there were three, mopped up the remaining grunts. Ren explained the escape plan to them, and the group moved out of the mess hall towards the vehicle bay. But when they arrived, the bay was already overrun. Elites and grunts were everywhere, at least 20 all together. None had noticed Ren’s entrance. He produced a grenade and signaled for the others to do the same. He yanked the pin and threw it, the others followed suit, scattering the area with explosions. The Covenant not killed in the blasts found them and fired. The marines returned fire, and Ren signaled for them to make a dash for the warthog that was still parked where Ren and Marcos had left it. One marine got hit with 4 plasma shots, three in the torso and one in the head. He dropped, and Ren knew there was nothing that could be done for him. He Sprinted harder to the Warthog and took cover behind it. Another marine hopped in the Gunner’s seat and opened fire on the Covenant, pumping lead into enemy, before being scorched by plasma fire. Only three humans remained now. While Ren and the last marine held off the Covenant, Marcos ran to the door that was only a few feet behind them. He opened it, and almost cried when he saw what was behind: the escape ship was in ruin. Covenant farces stood over bodies of marines that littered the room: they all had had the same plan of escape. There was no way the damaged craft would ever fly. Marcos rushed back to the Warthog to tell Ren.

Upon hearing Marcos’ report, Ren knew there was no way off the planet. “Sir, maybe we can get back to the tower and call a merchant ship, or hijack a Covenant ship, or—”

“Marcos, there is no merchant ship within a days journey of here. And there is no way we could get to a Covenant ship, let alone figure out how to fly it. We need to face the music. We’re not getting off of this plant.” Ren never liked to beat around the bush. “Let’s send as many of these bastards to Hell as we can.” Marcos grew silent, and he and the marine, a Private Jones, stared at Ren with blank expressions. Then a fury grew over Marcos’ face, the fury that only men who are about to die can achieve. He looked at the mass of Covenant in front of him, and then hopped into the gunner position of the warthog. He opened fire. Ren and Jones did the same. They mowed down countless enemies, but more kept coming through the bay door. As Jones fired his assault rifle, it started to click. He

was out of ammo. He whipped out his pistol and fired all his remaining rounds, until that was empty as well. He grabbed all four of his frag grenades, pulled the pins, and threw them. They exploded one right after the other. After realizing he had no remaining weapons, he picked up a stray steel pipe from the floor and charged the Covenant, but he was dead before he made contact with one. Meanwhile, a red Elite soldier primed up a plasma grenade, jumped and threw it. It soared through the air, finally coming down on its target.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Marcos!" Ren screamed when he saw the blue mass on Marcos' right shoulder. Gullites hadn't even noticed it. The two just stared at each other; both knowing what was going to happen. Then Marcos smiled.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Give 'em Hell, sarge," Marcos said calmly. "I'll see you on the other side"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Goodbye, Private."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ With that, Marcos ran full speed into the mass of Covenant. All Ren saw was a blue explosion. More Covenant quickly moved in to fill the gap that had been created by the explosion. Ren took Marcos' place at the gunner seat and rained lead down on the Covenant.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "_Maybe we will get medals,"_ Ren thought. "_even if they are awarded posthumously."_ Plasma poured into Ren, but he didn't feel any of it. He kept pulling the trigger until his body couldn't continue. He fell to his knees and collapsed lifelessly on the warthog. The last soldier on the base had just fallen. But their deaths were not in vain, because the men had managed to get out one last transmission, one last beacon of hope. They were able to send out a message:

The Covenant were coming to Earth.

(Note: The USNC Command on Earth witnessed the valiant actions of the men on Relay Station Infidel from the security camera feeds that Sgt. Noctune included with his warning transmission. They were awarded medals for their bravery. Sgt. Noctune and Pvt. Gullites were both awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for warning Earth of the Covenant invasion.)

Until Halo 2â€|

End
file.